

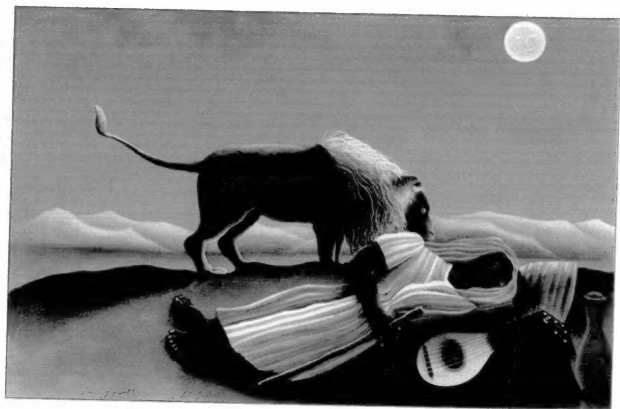
THE ANDRÉS SEGOVIA ARCHIVE

GENERAL EDITOR: ANGELO GILARDINO

# Ida Presti

# SEGOVIA

**pour guitare**



**BÈRBEN**

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## FOREWORD

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### IDA PRESTI (1924-1967)

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Ida Presti was born at Suresne (France) on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1924, the daughter of a French father and a Sicilian mother. Her father, Claude Montagnon, an amateur accordion player, felt passionately about the guitar after hearing Andrés Segovia perform at a concert. On the birth of his daughter, he decided she would become a guitarist.

Before Ida could even hold a guitar, her father trained her fingers for their future role on the instrument and taught her *solfeggio*. At the age of six years she began studying the guitar under her father's exclusive guidance. He was a considerate, if unremitting, teacher. However, not being a guitarist himself, he could not demonstrate practically how to play the instrument. Ida, therefore, through the exercise of her ingenuity, had to devise her own technique. Thanks to her extraordinary gifts, she was able to perform before an audience of experienced guitarists at the age of eight-and-a-half years. At the age of eleven, on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1935, she gave her first recital in Paris, at the *salle Chopin*. The press warmly acknowledged the appearance of a great artist:

*«Ida Presti a stupéfié les auditeurs de la salle Chopin par son récital de guitare. Elle montra un sentiment inné, un sens rythmique extraordinaire et un adresse incomparable dans le maniement de cet instrument.» (Aux écoutes, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1935, Paris)*

[Ida Presti astonished her listeners at the *salle Chopin* with her guitar recital. She showed an

innate feeling, an extraordinary rhythmic pulse and a matchless drive in her handling this instrument.]

As a consequence of her great success, Ida had the privilege of being booked for two consecutive years by the *Orchestre des concerts du conservatoire* to play a few solos during the intermissions of the orchestra's concerts.

Taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by one of Segovia's visits to Paris, Ida's father arranged an audition for his daughter before the great Spanish guitarist. Segovia's reaction was enthusiastic. Asked to give some lessons to the girl, he answered: «I have nothing to teach her.» The fame of the child prodigy spread steadily, and she was invited to play for the president of the French republic, as well as to take part in a movie entitled *Le Petit Chose*. Additionally, there was the prospect of a tour in the USA.

Just when Ida's future appeared full of possibilities, her father suddenly passed away following a heart attack. Her mother (Grazia Lo Presti), unprepared for dealing with such a calamity, left all the responsibilities as the head of the family to Ida. At the age of fourteen, she had to look after herself, her mother and her little sister Gina (then only three years old). With the beginning of the second world war some months later, the musical life of France was disrupted, and Ida's planned tour was cancelled. As a consequence, the financial situation of the family deteriorated. After some years of wandering between Nice, Paris and Marseille, Ida married Henri Rigo, a young man who was able to give her some years of peace. A great

happiness came with the birth of their daughter Elisabeth in 1944.

At the end of the war, Ida revived her career step by step, but, with the renewal of her artistic success, a serious disagreement arose between Ida and her husband, forcing them to divorce. In 1950 she met in Paris a young guitarist recently arrived from Egypt: Alexandre Lagoya. A great love united them in life and art: the following year (1952) saw the debut of the immortal Presti-Lagoya guitar duo and in 1953 the duo's happiness was further increased with the birth of their son Sylvain.

Not since Fernando Sor and Dionisio Aguado played together had two such distinguished guitar soloists joined their art (coincidentally, Paris was the location for both unions). As the repertoire for two guitars was not abundant, Alexandre Lagoya began the labour of expanding it by transcribing suitable pieces. Additionally, and quite soon, a considerable quantity of new works, written for and dedicated to the duo, was created by distinguished composers such as Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Daniel-Lesur, André Jolivet, Pierre-Petit, Joaquín Rodrigo and others. It was at this time that Ida Presti – who had always enjoyed a great gift for improvisation – started composing works for two guitars, such as *Danse d'Avila*, *La hongroise*, *Étude fantasque*, *Espagne*, and also works for solo guitar, such as *Étude du matin*, *Berceuse à ma mère*, *Segovia*, etc.

The career of the duo was prodigious. During fifteen years, they gave more than one thousand concerts, touring several times all over the world, and contributing greatly to the appreciation of the guitar by the most diverse audiences in Europe, Russia, USA, Indonesia and South Africa. The Presti-Lagoya duo was received everywhere with triumphal acclaim. A phrase in the newspaper *Combat* concisely summarises the general enthusiasm of audiences: «*This duo is one of the marvels of the world.*»

In 1967, at the height of their glory, Presti and

Lagoya went to the USA for a tour. They did not know it would be their last. Taken by a seizure after a concert in St. Louis – on Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> – Ida Presti was allowed to continue the tour after a medical examination, but during the flight to Rochester, the following day, a further and more severe attack obliged Lagoya to take her to a hospital immediately after landing. A subsequent injury during a careless bronchoscopic examination set in train a sequence of severe medical complications. Ida's condition deteriorated rapidly and she died a few hours later, at the tragically young age of forty-three.

**Anne Marillia**

Tours (France), February 2003.

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The history of the guitar, so full of myths and legends, is frequently lacking in genuine historical data. Like the generality of guitar-music scholars, I believed that the connections between the greatest male guitar player and the greatest female guitar player of the twentieth century had been insignificant. This belief was proved wrong on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001, when I had the emotional experience of handling, in the Segovia foundation at Linares (Spain), the treasured music papers of Andrés Segovia. Among the manuscripts was one which caught much more than my attention. Its title was – simply – *Segovia* and the name of its writer was, eloquently, Ida Presti. Nothing more is needed to demonstrate the substance of a relationship which had started about thirty years before this composition, in a hotel room in Paris, when Claude Montagnon had introduced his daughter, still a child, to Segovia for an audition. Mutual esteem and admiration was the basis of their relationship (a relationship necessarily maintained at long distance). Nevertheless, despite their demanding worldwide touring schedules, there were a few further meetings between Presti and Segovia here and there. Segovia, who was never fond of guitarists, liked

to listen to the Presti-Lagoya duo, and we know this event happened twice at least, in the USA. Their association was sealed in 1963 by Ida Presti, with the composition of the piece published here.

*Segovia* is a musical portrait, but not a sketch. Ida Presti did not aim to write a piece which Segovia would have enjoyed and played (though of course she would have been pleased if he had). Rather, she expressed through the piece her love of a world and a culture (the Spanish ones), of which Segovia was a living symbol. She identified the inner nature of Segovia's art with the inner soul of his native land, and paid a warm, deep, passionate homage to both of them.

Ida Presti was not a schooled composer – in the same way that Henri Rousseau was not a schooled painter – but her natural talent as a musician was so immense as to enable her to achieve with her musicality what most cultivated composers could not achieve with their training. This is why I had no hesitation in

including her piece in the series *The Andrés Segovia archive*, which I devised for the purpose of issuing, from the small mountain of music written for and dedicated to Segovia, only those works written by “true” composers. No exception to this strict criterion was required for this piece which, with its formal ingenuity, so full of invention, is worthy of its place alongside the works of the distinguished French composers in the series.

As an editor I have had little to do other than copy the music (which I have done faithfully) and suggest a more differentiated succession of tempo markings in the various sections of the work. The inclusion of a facsimile of the manuscript is justified for consistency with the house style of the whole series, rather than for assisting with the resolution of problems. Additionally, the manuscript has an intrinsic interest and pleasure of its own: it is, after all, Ida Presti's handwriting...

**Angelo Gilardino**

Vercelli (Italy), February 2003.



*Ida Presti*

*Pour Andrés Segovia*

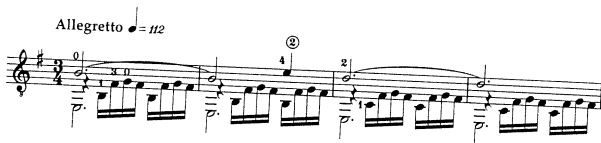
# SEGOVIA

(1962)

*Edited by  
Angelo Gilardino  
and Luigi Biscaldi*

**Ida Presti**  
(1924-1967)

**Allegretto** ♩ = 112



17 <sup>②</sup>

21

25

29 <sup>②</sup>

33

37

rit. -----

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written on a single staff in G major (one sharp, F#) and 4/4 time. It consists of 40 measures. Measures 17-20 show a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, with fingering numbers 2, 4, and 4. Measures 21-24 continue this pattern with more triplets and sixteenth notes, including a circled 6. Measures 25-28 feature a similar melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, with a circled 2. Measures 29-32 show a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, with a circled 2. Measures 33-36 continue the melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, with a circled 2. Measures 37-40 show a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, with a circled 2. The piece ends with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a dashed line.

Andante mosso  $\text{♩} = 76$



78

*un poco agitato*

84

Meno mosso  $\text{♩} = 68$

*rit.*

*dolce e malinconico*

89

93

97



CI\_\_\_\_\_

5

①

C

1

1

•



1

—

[illegible]

122 CII

Andante mosso  $\text{♩} = 76$  rit.

124 ③

*dolce ed espr.*

132 CIV

*marcato un poco agitato*

140 ⑤

148 ④

156 CI

*più intenso*

164 CIII CIII CVII ②

172 CII

179 ⑤ ③ ⑤

187 CII

194 CIV rit.

01 CII

*un poco rit.*

210

*dolce ed espr.*

215

220

*marcato e agitato*

226

*f*

*largamente*

232

*pizzicato*

Allegretto ♩ = 112

238



242



246



250



254







*Ida Presti*

*Segovia*

*Ida Presti.*



10ur Andrus segovia

# SEGOVIA

Ida Presti

*Allegretto*





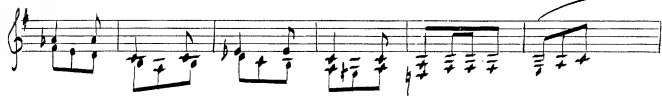
### *Andante Mosso*

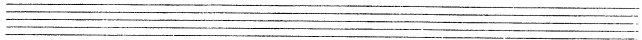
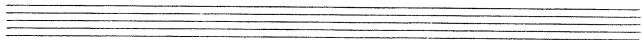
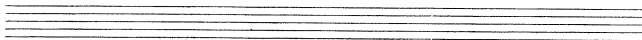
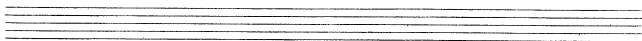












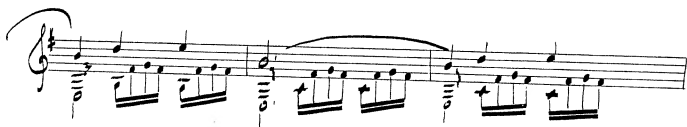


Tempo I









/da

le 14 Mai 1962